set up and margin money spent on them is Rs. 155.32 crores. 5.41 lakhs additional employment opportunities have been generated in these projects upto 2003-04.

Under this programme, KVIC provides development training to entrepreneurs through a number of accredited training centres. Training programme in various trades are also being organised in KVICs 15 departmentally run multi-disciplinary agencies. These training centres conduct various technical courses (both theoretical and practical) for the benefit of artisans/entrepreneurs engaged in Khadi and Village Industries.

(c) Does not arise.

Revolving funds for training rural youth in Karnataka

2387. SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Karnataka has sought Central assistance for starting a revolving fund for training rural youth in job-oriented courses;

(b) if so, the amount of Central assistance sought; and

(c) the present status of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Crisis in the Coir Industry

2388. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the Coir Industry is facing serious crisis;

(b) whether Government have contemplated any comprehensive plan to tide over the crisis;

(c) whether Government have taken initiative to put coir as an agricultural product in the WTO list; and

(d) if so, the details and the results of such initiatives?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Shrinkage of husk due to disease caused by mites on coconut palms as well as drought in certain areas has resulted in poor yields of the coir fibre. The resulting high prices of coir fibre has made production of coir products more expensive. In order to mitigate the scarcity of coir fibre, a number of measures are being taken including identification of new sources of supply in States, such as, Kanataka, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh to supplement the supplies from Tamil Nadu and Kerala, three de-fibering units have been set up in Alleppey District of Kerala to promote utilization of husk available locally, and making efforts at marketing arrangements for distribution of coir fibre to small scale manufacturers of coir products.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The Government has already filed its negotiating proposals with the WTO for including products such as coir in the rationalization of products coverage in the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA). Pursuant to General Council Decision of 1st August, 2004, the negotiations will continue upto December, 2005.

Duties of Coir Board in Andhra Pradesh

2389. SHRI S. M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have assigned specific duties to the Coir Board to help coconut growers;

(b) to what extent the Coir Board has made its presence felt in Andhra Pradesh;

(c) the details of such work done by the Coir Board in helping farmers of Andhra Pradesh in the year 2003-04;

(d) whether any funds were made available by the Coir Board in that period; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): (a) to (c) The Coir Board, a statutory body, had been established for the promotion and development of coir industry in India. Extending help to coconut farmers does not come under its purview.